Met Office launches Quality Mark scheme

25 July 2014 - Met Office has launched a Quality Mark scheme for independent winter gritters.

Working alongside the Met Office's OpenSite forecast service, the Quality Mark will help winter gritters win and retain business. It will help them differentiate themselves from their competitors by demonstrating an understanding of the weather for winter gritting, and providing reassurance to their customers that their gritting decisions are made using the most accurate forecasts.

The Met Office Quality Mark is the only such mark in the industry. Suitably qualified winter gritters will be entitled to display the mark to certify that they meet strict criteria set by the Met Office, allowing their customers to quickly identify the mark of a professional gritting provider.

There are four 'tiers', which winter gritters may qualify for, ranging from a basic 'training' tier, to bronze, silver and gold. All Quality Mark holders will receive product guidance on how to best use the Met Office forecast information provided.

Ground Control is the first customer to qualify for the scheme. Ground Control's Winter Maintenance Operations Manager, Andy Simpson, said: "I believe the Met Office is the best winter maintenance forecaster in the business and the Gold level Quality Mark separates the best from the rest for Winter Maintenance. With the British climate being so changeable it is essential that we have a weather forecast that we can rely on and the Met Office has been a fantastic partner over the years."

Richard Stedall, Road Account Manager at the Met Office, adds: "As of 13th August we have a total of 5 customers signed up to the quality mark scheme.

"This Quality Mark scheme has been set up to allow gritting companies to show their customers that they are investing in training and the services that they deliver to their customers. To qualify for the highest level, Ground Control have also received appropriate road meteorology training through the world renowned Met Office College, and take at least one supplementary Met Office service to aid winter maintenance."

Other testimonials for the Quality Mark scheme include:

The Gritting Company : "We are one of the longest established and largest private winter maintenance providers in the UK have been taking forecasts from the Met Office for over a decade. Over the past 10 years the Met Office have consistently provided our company with the most accurate and reliable forecast to the benefit of our winter maintenance clients and our business. The implementation of the Met Office Quality Mark and securing the Gold level is a reassurance and clear indication to our clients that their cover is based on a forecast produced specifically for Winter Maintenance Companies using the most accurate data available. What's more, the forecast is interpreted and actioned by our staff who are trained to Met Office standards."

Litterboss Ltd : "The Met Office have been our weather partner since we started winter maintenance operations almost 20 years ago. We rely on the Met Office to deliver to us timely and accurate weather forecasting throughout the winter months and I believe there is no substitute for the Met Office and the OpenSite forecasting system. The Gold Level Quality Mark will further differentiate us from our competitors and demonstrate our desire to constantly develop our service offering."

Ice Watch Ltd : "Ice Watch is committed to supplying our customers with the best possible winter gritting and snow clearance service. To do this we ne need our staff to be properly trained and we need to obtain the best possible forecasts for them to work from. Our staff are trained by the Met Office who supply us with training, daily OpenSite forecasts, evening updates and the 2-5 day forecasts. The Met Office package is the best and our customers expect nothing less than the best."

Botanical Group Services : "For Botanical Group Services the Gold Quality Mark introduced by the Met Office serves to further underline the integrity of our gritting service and it is most welcomed. In addition to confirming the authenticity of Botanical utilising the very best information available, attainment of the standards serves to strengthen our working relationship with the Met Office and ensures improved learning for our own weather team in order that we can benefit our clients with a more accurate interpretation of the weather reports that best suits their individual needs."

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